

**Officers**

Merritt Lane  
Chair

Steven W. Usdin  
Vice Chair

Anne P. Baños  
Secretary

Louis M. Freeman, Jr.  
Treasurer

Nathalie Simon  
Assistant Secretary

Vanessa Claiborne  
Assistant Treasurer

**Past Chair**

Norma Grace

**President & CEO**

Rebecca Mowbray  
Samuel Zemurray Chair in  
Research Leadership

**Board Members**

Ryan Adkerson  
Elizabeth Boh  
Melanie Bronfin  
Carlin Conner  
Mollye Demosthenidis  
R. Foster Duncan  
Ben Dupuy  
Perry Eastman IV  
Jessie S. Haynes  
Elizabeth Hefler  
John Landrum  
Ronald P. McClain  
Graham Ralston  
Patty Riddlebarger  
David Rieveschl  
Jennifer Roberts  
Kenneth St. Charles  
Syrita Steib  
Douglas M. Stokes  
Vera Triplett  
Lamar Villere  
Charles West

**Honorary Board**

Harry J. Blumenthal, Jr.  
J. Kelly Duncan  
Ludovico Feoli  
Hardy B. Fowler  
Louis M. Freeman  
Richard W. Freeman, Jr.  
Ronald J. French  
David Guidry  
Hans B. Jonassen  
Diana M. Lewis  
Mark A. Mayer  
Anne M. Milling  
R. King Milling  
Lynes R. Sloss  
Sterling Scott Willis

**BUREAU OF GOVERNMENTAL RESEARCH**

1055 St. Charles Ave., Suite 200  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
504-525-4152 / [www.bgr.org](http://www.bgr.org)

December 10, 2024

The Honorable Scott Walker  
The Honorable Jennifer Van Vrancken  
The Honorable Marion Edwards  
The Honorable Deano Bonano  
The Honorable Byron Lee  
The Honorable Arita Bohannon  
The Honorable Hans Liljeberg  
Members of the Jefferson Parish Council

200 Derbigny Street  
6th Floor  
Gretna, LA 70053

Re: Summary Ordinance No. 26443, Proposed Amendments to Jefferson  
Parish Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2, Section 2-155.10

Dear Councilmembers,

In 2011, Jefferson Parish voters amended the Parish charter, creating the Office of Inspector General (OIG) and the Ethics and Compliance Commission (ECC) to increase accountability of parish government. As provided in the charter, the Parish Council may adopt ordinances setting forth the entities' organizational framework, authority, duties, responsibilities and other functions.

The proposed amendments to the ordinances governing the OIG that the Parish Council will consider on December 11 are based on [guidelines for prosecutors](#), whose roles and responsibilities are very different from those of inspectors general. As a result, the amendments do not align with recognized [best practices for inspectors general](#), and risk undermining the OIG's ability to effectively carry out its mission to identify and deter waste, fraud and abuse in parish government. In particular, the amendments could prevent the OIG from communicating concerns and findings from its activities to the public, stripping the office of one of its core functions as a government oversight body.

The proposed amendments would prohibit the OIG from "making public comments that have a substantial likelihood of heightening public condemnation of any individual or entity that may be the subject of an investigation, potential investigation or report." Given the office's purpose – essentially identifying performance or ethical concerns in government operations – any of its investigations or inquiries could cause members of the public to question the capability of a department, agency or public

Members of the Jefferson Parish Council

December 10, 2024

Page 2

official. The critical nature of the OIG's work means that public responses to its discussion may often include some degree of condemnation of the actions of the work's subjects.

The Bureau of Governmental Research urges the council to reject the proposed amendments and ensure that the OIG retains the ability to communicate its work to the public in line with nationally established best practices for inspectors general.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rebecca Mowbray". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping "R" and a distinct "M".

Rebecca Mowbray

President and CEO

*Samuel Zemurray Chair in Research Leadership*

Bureau of Governmental Research